

were the opening acts in what was to prove a long day for the Signoracci brothers. For them to have been contacted so early clearly establishes that the Vatican had spoken to the Institute of Medicine, who employ the brothers, and given instructions between 4.45 a.m. and 5.00 a.m.

At 7.00 a.m., more than two hours after the death had been discovered by Sister Vincenza, the world at large remained ignorant of the fact that Pope John Paul I was no more. The Vatican village, meanwhile, was totally ignoring Villot's edict. Cardinal Benelli in Florence heard the news by telephone at 6.30 a.m. Grief-stricken and openly crying, he immediately retired to his room and began to pray. All the hopes dreams, aspirations were shattered. The plans Luciani had made, the changes, the new direction, all had come to nothing. When a Pope dies, all decisions yet to be publicly announced, die with him. Unless his successor decides to carry them through.

By 7.20 a.m. the bells in the parish church in Albino Luciani's birthplace, Canale D'Agordo, were tolling. Vatican Radio remained silent on the death. Finally at 7.27 a.m., some two-and-three-quarter hours after the death had been discovered by Sister Vincenza, Cardinal Villot felt sufficiently in control of events:

"This morning, September 29th, 1978, about 5.30, the private Secretary of the Pope, contrary to custom not having found the Holy Father in the chapel of his private apartment, looked for him in his room and found him dead in bed with the light on, like one who was intent on reading. The physician, Dr Renato Buzzonetti, who hastened at once, verified the death, which took place presumably towards eleven o'clock yesterday evening, as 'Sudden death that could be related to acute myocardial infarction.'"

Later bulletins stated that the secretary in question was Father Magee who, according to the Vatican, usually said Mass with the Pope at 5.30 IGN 209 a.m., and that the Pope had been reading The Imitation of Christ, the fifteenth-century work usually attributed to Thomas à Kempis.

Along with the medicine, the Papal notes, the Will, the glasses and the slippers, Sister Vincenza and her discovery of the body at 4.45 a.m. had vanished. Even with two-and-three-quarter hours in which to concoct a story, Villot and those who advised him made a botch of it. While every newspaper and radio and television station in the free world was carrying stories based on the Vatican bulletins, Villot was having difficulties keeping his ship watertight.

The idea of placing a book that Luciani revered into his dead hands might have seemed inspired thinking to Villot. The problem was that there was not a copy in the Pope's bedroom. Further there was not a copy in the entire Papal Apartment. Luciani's copy was still in Venice and when a few days earlier he had wished to quote accurately from the book, Lorenzi was sent to borrow a copy from his Vatican confessor. Don Diego had returned the copy before the Pope's death. His complaints about an obvious fabrication could not be stilled. The Vatican continued to maintain that particular lie until October 2nd - for four days. Within those first four days the false information given out by the Vatican had become in the minds of the people, the reality, the truth.

IGN 210

When Cardinal Benelli finally emerged from his room at 9.00 a.m. he was immediately surrounded by reporters. With tears still running down his face he said: 'The Church has lost the right man for the right moment. We are very distressed. We are left frightened. Man cannot explain such a thing. It is a moment which limits and conditions us.'

Back in the Vatican Villot's plans for an immediate embalming had run into trouble. Cardinals Felici in Padua and Benelli in Florence, who knew very precisely the nature of the changes Luciani had been

about to make were particularly disturbed and indicated so in telephone conversations with Villot. Already there were murmurs in Italy that an autopsy should be performed. It was a view that in the circumstances Benelli and Felici were inclined at least to consider. If the body were embalmed then a subsequent autopsy would be useless if the cause of death was poison.

Officially the Vatican created the impression that the body of Pope John Paul I was embalmed before being put on public display in the Sala Clementina at noon on Friday. In fact the mourners that day gazed upon an unembalmed Luciani in his natural state. Father Diego Lorenzi:

The body was taken from the private apartment to the Clementina Hall in the Papal Apartment. At that time no embalming had been done. Papa Luciani was dressed by Father Magee, Monsignor Noè and myself. I stayed with the body as did Magee until 11.00

In God's Name-pages 18/1/07 10:55 am Page 211  
We Are Left Frightened

211

a.m. The Signoracci came at that time and the body was taken to the Sala Clementina.

Meanwhile the debate about an autopsy was growing among the

minority of Cardinals who were gathering in Rome.

If Albino Luciani

had been an ordinary citizen of Rome there would have been no

debate. There would have been an immediate autopsy. Italian law

states that no embalming can be undertaken until at least 24 hours after

death without dispensation from a magistrate. If an Italian citizen had

died in similar circumstances to those of Luciani there would have

been an immediate autopsy. The moral would appear to be that Italian

citizens who wish to ensure that after their death the correct legal steps

are taken, should not become Head of State of the Roman Catholic

Church.

For men with nothing to hide, the actions of Villot and other

members of the Roman Curia continued to be incomprehensible.

When men conspire to cover up it is inexorably because there is something to cover.

IGN213.

During the course of the day everything else within the Papal Apartments belonging to Albino Luciani was removed, including his letters, notes, books, and the small handful of personal mementoes such as the photograph of his parents with an infant Pia. Villot's colleagues from the Secretariat of State removed all the confidential papers. Rapidly all material evidence that Albino Luciani had ever lived and worked there was boxed and carried away. By 6.00 p.m. the entire 19 rooms of the Papal Apartments were totally bereft of anything remotely associated with the Papacy of Luciani. It was as if he had never been there, never existed. At 6.00 p.m. the Papal Apartments were sealed by Cardinal Villot. They were to remain unopened until a successor had been elected.

Unobtrusively the nuns and the two secretaries left. Magee kept as a memento the cassette tapes used by Luciani to improve his English. Lorenzi took with him a jumble of images and memories. Carefully avoiding the waiting reporters, the group took up residence in a house run by the Sisters of Maria Bambina.

John Magee was destined to be a secretary to a Pope for a third time, a unique and remarkable achievement. Diego Lorenzi, the intense young Italian, was totally devastated by the death of a man he loved.

He would return to northern Italy to work at a small school. Vincenza would be sent even further north to an obscure convent. The Vatican machine would ensure that neither was easy to locate with this virtual banishment.

After the doors of the Clementina Hall closed to the public at 6.00 p.m. on Friday September 29th, surely the most relieved man in the Vatican was Villot. Finally the work of the body technicians could begin. Once the body had been embalmed it would be a difficult task during any subsequent autopsy to discover and establish poison within the body. If the Pope had indeed died because of acute myocardial infarction the embalming fluids would not destroy the naturally damaged blood vessels.

. Of greater pertinence perhaps was the statement that the Italian reporters

In God's Name-pages 18/1/07 10:55 am Page 214  
214

In God's Name

had finally managed to extract from Cardinal Villot: 'When I saw His Holiness yesterday evening, he was in perfectly good health, totally lucid and he had given me full instructions for the next day.'

Behind closed doors in the Clementina Hall the lengthy process of embalming continued for three hours. The care and preservation of the body was the responsibility of Professor Cesare Gerin, but the actual embalming work was performed by Professor Marracino and Ernesto and Renato Signoracci. When the two Signoracci brothers had examined the body before it had been moved to the Clementina, they had concluded from the lack of rigor mortis and the temperature of the body that death had taken place not at 11.00 p.m. on the 28th but between 4.00 a.m. and 5.00 a.m. on the 29th. They were given independent confirmation of their conclusion by Monsignor Noè, who advised the brothers that the Pope had died shortly before 5.00 a.m. I have interviewed both brothers at length on three separate occasions. They are adamant that death occurred between 4.00 a.m. and 5.00 a.m.

and that the Pope's body was discovered within one hour of his death.

If they are accurate then either the Pope was still alive when Sister Vincenza entered his bedroom or he was barely dead. Only a full autopsy would have resolved these conflicting opinions.

At the Vatican's insistence, no blood was drained from the body, neither were any organs removed. Injections of formalin and other preserving chemicals were made into the body through the femoral arterial and vein passages. The entire process took over three hours.

The reason the process took so long was because, contrary to normal practice when the blood is drained or cleared with a solution of salt water that is circulated around the body, the Vatican was adamant that no blood should be drawn off. A small quantity of blood would of course have been more than sufficient for a forensic scientist to establish the presence of any poisonous substances.

The cosmetic treatment given to the body eliminated the expression of anguish upon the face. The hands that had gripped the now missing sheets of paper were clasped around a rosary. Cardinal Villot finally retired to bed shortly before midnight.

Pope Paul VI, in keeping with Italian law, had not been embalmed

until twenty-four hours after his death. Although there had been allegations of medical incompetence after Paul had died, there had not been a single suggestion of foul play. Now with not only the general public but radio and television stations and the press urging an autopsy, the body of Albino Luciani had been embalmed some twelve hours after it had been discovered.

In God's Name-pages 18/1/07 10:55 am Page 215  
We Are Left Frightened

215

By Saturday September 30th, one particular question was being asked with increasing urgency. 'Why no autopsy?' The news media began to seek an explanation for such a sudden unheralded death. The Curia had been very quick to remind enquiring reporters of an off-thecuff remark Albino Luciani had made during his last General Audience on Wednesday, September 27th. Turning to a group of sick and handicapped people in the Nervi Hall, Luciani had said, 'Remember your Pope has been in hospital eight times and had four operations'.

The Vatican Press Office began to respond to requests for details of Luciani's health by repeating the late Pope's phrase. They used it so

excessively it began to take on the quality of a telephone answering machine, with a comparable lack of satisfaction to callers.

The various media recalled that - Luciani had not appeared to be in ill health during his brief Papacy. On the contrary, they observed, he appeared to be the picture of health, full of life and zest. Others, who had known Luciani for considerably longer, began to be contacted for their views.

When Monsignor Senigaglia, Luciani's secretary in Venice for over six years, revealed that the late Pope had undergone a full medical check up shortly before leaving Venice for the Conclave and the medical examination had 'been favourable in all respects' the demands for an autopsy grew louder.

When a variety of Italian medical experts began to state categorically the need for an autopsy to ascertain the precise cause of death the panic within the Vatican reached new heights. It was clear that while doctors were prepared to put forward a variety of reasons that could have been contributory factors (the sudden stress of becoming Pope was a particular favourite), none was prepared to accept without an autopsy the Vatican's assertion that Albino Luciani died of myocardial infarction.

The Vatican countered by stating that it was against Vatican rules for an autopsy to be performed. This was yet another lie passed out to the world's Press. Further questioning by Italian journalists established that the Vatican was referring to the Apostolic Constitution announced by Pope Paul VI in 1975. This was the document which laid down the procedures for electing his successor, with its search for bugs in the Conclave area and its instructions on the size of voting cards. Careful reading of the document establishes that Paul had failed to cover the possibility of any controversy over the cause of his death. An autopsy was neither banned nor approved. It was simply not referred to.

LC79

OTTAVIANI: Dr Buzzonetti, you are the director of the Vatican Health service.

BUZZONETTI: That is correct Your Eminence.

OTTAVIANI: (Smiling benignly at him) We would like to ask you a few questions about the morning you examined the body.

FELICI: Everything that is said here is completely confidential. Even the fact that we've had this meeting.

BUZONETTI: I understand.

OTTAVIANI: You determined the cause of death.

BUZONETTI: An acute myocardial infarction...that is heart failure. Your Eminence.

OTTAVIANI: (Nodding, and looking at a paper) And you estimated his death occurred at approximately p.m. ?

BUZONETTI: Probably while his Holiness was still awake.

OTTAVIANI: Why do you say that ?

BUZONETTI: The state of rigor of the body...also his glasses were still on and the light by his bed was on.

OTTAVIANI (Pause) I see....

FELICI: Was there any evidence of some other cause of death ?

BUZONNETTI: Such as ?

FELICI: Anything unusual ?

BUZZONETTI: No.

OTTAVIANI: Did you see any evidence that the Pope had been murdered ?

BUZZONETTI: Of course not.

OTTAVIANI: No, of course not.

BENELLI: (To the CONFESSOR) So simple, isn't it ?  
(BENELLI moves towards the others)

OTTAVIANI: (He looks at FELICI) Thank you very much doctor. (BUZZONETTI starts to leave).

BENELLI: Before determining that the Pope died of a heart attack how often had you examined him?

BUZZINETTI: His doctor was Dr Da Ros in Venics. I had never examined him.

OTTAVIANI Never ?

BUZZONETTI Not until he died.

BENELLI: Have you ever spoken to Dr Da Ros ?

BUZZONETTI: Last week. He told the Pope was in excellent health.

OTTAVINI He's dead.

BUZZONETTI: Before his death, he was in excellent health.

BENELLI Did you speak to Dr Da Ros after he

died ?

BUZZONETTI: No.

BENELLI: Did you ask anyone if he had any symptoms , chest pains, shortness of breath ?

BUZZONETTI: (Becoming uncomfortable.) No...I assume that if someone had noticed anything they would have told me.

OTTAVIANI: No one told you about any symptoms?

BUZZONETTI: That is correct.

BENELLI: Then doctor, what was the basis for your diagnosis ?

BUZZONETTI: Of course a confident diagnosis can only be made after an autopsy and pathological examination.

BENELLI I am aware of that. What was the basis for your diagnosis?

BUZZONETTI: (A pause) He died suddenly, while reading in his bed. His complexion was slightly pale. These facts are consistent with a heart attack.

BENELLI: I have spoken to a number of heart specialists. They tell that when people die of a heart attack, they are not found sitting up in bed with their glasses on. There is usually a tightness in the chest, often accompanied by severe pain along the left side. The Pope would have reacted to the pain He would have made some effort to get help, to stay alive.

BUZZONETTI: (Reluctantly) Perhaps.

(  
*BENELLI There were alarm buttons on either side of the Pope's bed, centimetres from his hands. Would a heart attack have prevented him from pushing one of the buttons?*

*BUZZONETTI: (Reluctantly) Not usually.*

*BENELLI: If, somehow, it did, wouldn't there*

*still be some evidence of an attempt to reach them  
?(Pause) Did you see any evidence of such an effort  
?*

*BUZZONETTI: No*

*BENELLI: So how can you say that the Pope died of a heart attack?*

*BUZZONETTI: I....He was the Pope. It must have been a heart attack.*

*BENELLI: Did you see any evidence of poison?*

*BUZZONETTI: (Shocked) No. Who would want to murder the Pope?*

*OTTAVIANI: No one. Are you finished Cardinal Benelli?*

*BENELLI: Yes. (BUZZONETTI exits)*

*OTTAVIANI: God help us if we're ever sick. (To FELICI) Where did we get him ?*

IGN207/208

Dr Buzzonetti made a brief examination of the body.  
He advised

Villot that the cause of death was acute myocardial infarction, a heart attack. The doctor put the time of death at about 11.00 p.m. on the previous evening.

To determine the time of death as 11.00 p.m. and the cause as myocardial infarction after such a brief external examination is a medical impossibility.

Villot had already decided before Buzzonetti's examination, which took place at approximately 6 a.m., that the body of Albino Luciani should be immediately embalmed. Even before his phone call to Cardinal Confalonieri at 5.15 a.m. Villot had put into motion the initial course of action to ensure a rapid embalmment. The Signoracci brothers Ernesto and Renato had embalmed the last two Popes. Now, a dawn telephone call and a Vatican car that arrived at 5.00 a.m. were the opening acts in what was to prove a long day for the Signoracci brothers. For them to have been contacted so early clearly establishes that the Vatican had spoken to the Institute of Medicine, who employ the brothers, and given instructions between 4.45 a.m. and 5.00 a.m.

IGN 216

It is abundantly clear that Paul's life could have been the subject of prolonged. The medical treatment he had been given during his last days, had in the

opinion of many of the world's experts, left a great deal to be desired. From his Cape Town Hospital, Dr Christian Barnard, when informed that Pope Paul had not been placed in an intensive care unit, said: 'If this was to happen in South Africa, the doctors responsible would have been denounced to their Medical Association for negligence.'

One of the principal doctors in control of Pope Paul's treatment had been Dr Renato Buzzonetti, the deputy head of the Vatican medical services. Now the same doctor, who in Dr Barnard's view had acted negligently in August, had performed a medical impossibility in determining the cause of Albino Luciani's lonely death. Without an autopsy his conclusion was totally without meaning.

LC89

*BENELLI: Did you read what Baggio said to the press when asked about John Paul's death ?*

*GANTIN: No.*

*BENELLI: The Lord uses us, but he does not need us. Now we will make another one.*

IGN210

Cardinal Baggio, one of the men whom Luciani had determined to move out of Rome was less fulsome. 'The Lord uses us but does not

need us.' He said this early in the morning after he had seen the dead body. He continued, 'He was like a parish priest for the Church.' Asked what would happen now he responded calmly, 'Now we will make another one.'

LC91

*SUENENS: I spoke to Luciani the day he died.*  
*(BENELLI stops and looks at SUENENS) He told me about his meeting with Baggio. He also told me about his meeting with Villot and his decision on Marcinkus.*

*BENELLI: What happened ?*

*SUENENS: He was sending them home.*

*NOTE. The above scene dramatizes the following conversation and replaces Cardinal Colombo with Cardinal Suenens.*

IGN201

Shortly after a pleasant, uneventful supper, the Pope went back to his study to consider the notes he had used during his discussions with Villot. At 8.45 p.m. Lorenzi connected him with Cardinal Colombo in Milan. The Cardinal declined to be interviewed but other sources indicate that they discussed the changes Luciani intended to make. Clearly there was no dissension. Cardinal Colombo has gone as far as recalling, 'He spoke to me for a long time in a completely normal tone

from which no physical illness could be inferred.  
He was full of serenity  
and hope. His final greeting was "pray".'

IGN 197

Luciani advised Villot that Marcinkus was to be removed immediately. Not in a week's or a month's time. The following day. He was to take leave of absence. A suitable post in Chicago would be found for him once the problem of Cardinal Cody had been resolved.

IGN199

Cardinal Pericle Felici was to become Vicar of Rome, replacing Cardinal Ugo Poletti, who would replace Benelli as Archbishop of Florence. Benelli was to become Secretary of State. He would take over Villot's job.

Villot considered the proposed changes that included his own 'resignation'. He was old and tired. Further, he was also seriously ill. An illness not helped by the two packs of cigarettes he smoked daily. Villot had made it plain in late August that he sought early retirement. Now it had come somewhat sooner than he had bargained for. There would be a period of handover of course but to all intents and purposes his power

was now ceasing. The fact that Luciani proposed to replace him with Benelli must have been particularly vexing to Villot. Benelli had been his number two in the past and it had not been the happiest of relationships.

LC92

NOTE. They are discussing Pope Paul.

*BENELLI: What was his greatest achievement ?*

*VILLOT: His encyclical on birth control.....*

LC 93.

*BENELLI: Tell us about John Paul's feelings towards Paul's encyclical on birth control.*

*VILLOT: (pause) We would have convinced him.*

*BENELLI: Of what ?*

*VILLOT: That Pope Paul was right.*

*BENELLI; How could you if you were no longer here?*

*VILLOT: What do you mean ?*

*BENELLI; You were leaving Rome.*

*VILLOT I had no intention of leaving Rome.*

*BENELLI: On September the twenty eight, the day the Pope died he told you that he was removing you as Secretary of State.*

*VILLOT: How dare you say that ?*

BENELLI: I don't say it Cardinal Suenens does.

OTAVIANI: Suenens ?

BENELLI: He spoke to John Paul right after the Pope's meeting with Cardinal Villot.

OTTAVIANI: And who was to replace Cardinal Villot ?

BENELLI: I was (Back to VILLOT) Do you deny it ?

VILLOT: (Looks at OTTAVIANI and then FELICI) I don't deny it.

.

IGN201

Shortly after a pleasant, uneventful supper, the Pope went back to his study to consider the notes he had used during his discussions with

Villot. At 8.45 p.m. Lorenzi connected him with Cardinal Colombo in

Milan. The Cardinal declined to be interviewed but other sources

indicate that they discussed the changes Luciani intended to make.

Clearly there was no dissension. Cardinal Colombo has gone as far as

recalling, 'He spoke to me for a long time in a completely normal tone

from which no physical illness could be inferred.

He was full of serenity

and hope. His final greeting was "pray".'

IGN 197

Luciani advised Villot that Marcinkus was to

be removed immediately. Not in a week's or a month's time. The following day. He was to take leave of absence. A suitable post in Chicago would be found for him once the problem of Cardinal Cody had been resolved.

IGN199

Cardinal Pericle Felici was to become Vicar of Rome, replacing Cardinal Ugo Poletti, who would replace Benelli as Archbishop of Florence. Benelli was to become Secretary of State. He would take over Villot's job.

Villot considered the proposed changes that included his own 'resignation'. He was old and tired. Further, he was also seriously ill.

An illness not helped by the two packs of cigarettes he smoked daily.

Villot had made it plain in late August that he sought early retirement.

Now it had come somewhat sooner than he had bargained for. There would be a period of handover of course but to all intents and purposes his power was now ceasing. The fact that Luciani proposed to replace him with Benelli must have been particularly vexing to Villot. Benelli had been his number two in the past and it had not been the happiest of relationships.

IGN156

Now in September, while the world's Press unquestioningly repeated the lies of L'Osservatore Romano, Albino Luciani was heard

in the Papal Apartments talking to his Secretary of State, Cardinal

Villot: 'I will be happy to talk to this United States delegation on the issue. To my mind we cannot leave the situation as it currently stands.'

The issue was world population. The 'situation' was Humanae

Vitae. As the conversation progressed Villot heard Pope John Paul I express a view that many others, including his private secretary Father Diego Lorenzi, had heard many times before. Father Lorenzi is only

IGN157

one of a number of people who have been able to quote to me Luciani's exact words:

I am aware of the ovulation period in a woman with its range of fertility from twenty-four to thirty-six hours. Even if one allows a sperm life of forty-eight hours the maximum time of possible conception is less than four days. In a regular cycle this means four days of fertility and twenty-four days of infertility. How on earth can it be a sin to say instead of twenty-four days, twenty-eight days?

What had prompted this truly historic conversation had been a tentative approach to the Vatican from the American Embassy in

Rome. The American Embassy had been contacted by the State Department in Washington and also by US Congressman James Scheuer. The Congressman headed a House Select Committee on Population and was also Vice-Chairman of the UN fund for population activities, inter-parliamentary working group. The story of the Luciani document to Pope Paul VI on birth control had alerted Scheuer and his Committee to the possibility of change in the Church's position on birth control. It seemed to Scheuer that it was unlikely that his group would obtain an audience with Luciani so soon in his Papacy but he still considered it worth the effort of putting pressure on the State Department and also, through the Embassy in Rome, on the Vatican. Scheuer was destined to hear some good news.

IGN158

Now that Albino Luciani was wearing the shoes of the fisherman he determined to follow John's example of a revolutionary 100 days. At the top of his list of priorities of reform and change were the need to alter radically the Vatican's relationship with capitalism and the desire to alleviate the very real suffering he had personally witnessed that had stemmed directly from Humanae Vitae.

According to Cardinal Benelli, Cardinal Felici and other Vatican sources, the austere Villot listened askance as the new Pope elaborated

on the problems the encyclical had caused. It was clear from his attitude during my interviews with him that on this issue Felici was heavily in sympathy with Villot.

Only a few weeks earlier Villot had been extolling the encyclical on the tenth anniversary of its publication. In a letter to Archbishop John Quinn of San Francisco, Villot reaffirmed Paul's opposition to artificial contraception. The Secretary of State had stressed how important Paul had considered this teaching to be, that it was 'according to God's Law'.

There was much more in a similar vein. Now, less than two months later, he was obliged to listen to Paul's successor taking a reverse position. The coffee grew cold as Luciani, rising from his desk, began to pace his study and quietly talk of some of the effects that *Humanae Vitae* had produced over the past decade.

The encyclical which had been designed to strengthen Papal authority by denying that there could be any change in the traditional teaching on birth control, had had precisely the opposite effect. The evidence was irrefutable. In Belgium, Holland, Germany, Britain, the United States and in many other countries there had not only been marked opposition to the encyclical, there had also been marked

disobedience. The maxim had rapidly become that if one priest did not take a tolerant attitude within the confessional the sinner shopped around for a more liberated priest. Luciani cited examples of that contradiction he knew of personally in the Veneto region.

IGN159

The theory of *Humanae Vitae* might well look like an ideal moral viewpoint when proclaimed from within the all-male preserve of the Vatican. The reality Luciani had observed in northern Italy and abroad clearly demonstrated the inhumanity of the edict. In that decade world population had increased by over three-quarters of a billion people.

When Villot demurred to point out that Pope Paul had stressed the virtues of the natural method of contraception Luciani merely smiled at him, not the full beaming smile that the public knew; it was more of a sad smile. 'Eminence, what can we old celibates really know of the sexual desires of the married?'

This conversation, the first of a number the Pope had with his Secretary of State on the subject, took place in the Pope's study in the Papal Apartments on Tuesday, September 19th. They discussed the subject for nearly forty-five minutes. When the meeting ended and Villot was about to leave, Luciani walked to the door with him and

said:

Eminence. We have been discussing birth control for about forty-five minutes. If the information I have been given, the various statistics, if that information is accurate, then during the period of time we have been talking over one thousand children under the age of five have died of malnutrition. During the next forty-five minutes while you and I look forward with anticipation to our next meal a further thousand children will die of malnutrition. By this time tomorrow thirty thousand children who at this moment are alive, will be dead - of malnutrition. God does not always provide.

The Secretary of State for the Vatican was apparently unable to find an adequate exit line.

All details of the possible audience with a United States delegation, on the subject of population, were kept a carefully guarded secret both by the Vatican and the State Department. Such a

meeting coming so early in Luciani's Papacy would rightly be seen as highly significant if it became known publicly.

LC93

BENELLI: And later that evening you returned. You came to see the Pope one final time.

VILLOT: I saw the Pope frequently.

BENELLI: You had just been removed. Your returned to try to get the Pope to change his mind.

LC94

VILLOT: He was going to destroy everything that Pope Paul accomplished

BENELLI: And you failed.

VILLOT: He wouldn't listen.

BENELLI And the papers were already drawn up. The papers removing you and others.

VILLOT: He had papers.

BENELLI And that night he took them to bed with him.

VILLOT: He was going to remove the best people in the Curia.

BENELLI He was Pope and you had to obey.

VILLOT I did not have to obey.

BENELLI As long as you live you had to obey.

(Pause) What happened that evening of September the twenty eight ? Was it the coffee ? Was it the sweets that he loved ? Was it the bottle of pills ?

VILLOT: There is no evidence that he was poisoned.

BENELLI: You destroyed the evidence.

VILLOT No Pope is more important than the Church. The Curia has defeated greater Popes than John Paul.

VILLOT: I buried him in paper.

BENELLI: But he made decisions.

VILLOT: And we told him no.

BENELLI Again and again you told him no.

VILLOT: Yes.

LC95

BENELLI And day after day the piles of paper grew higher.

VILLOT: Yes.

BENELLI: For a year nothing has been decided. Now in one month you poured on his shoulders every problem you could find.

VILLOT; He was the Pope. He had to make decisions.

BENELLI And when he made them you told him no.

VILLOT: He was wrong (BENELLI stares at him) I am the Secretary of State. It is my right to tell the Pope he is wrong.

BENELLI: It is the Pope's right to make the final decisions.

VILLOT Error has no rights.

BENELLI Are you saying the Pope was in error ?

VILLOT: Every word. Every action.

BENELLI: Who are you to judge the Pope ?

VILLOT: He wasn't a Pope. He was a country priest that you pushed into the papacy. He was your Pope, not ours.

BENELLI: And this country priest had ideas of his own. Ideas he was willing to fight for.

VILLOT He would have destroyed the Church.

BENELL: Who made you the final arbiter ?

VILLOT: The Curia is the Church.

BENELLI He would have changed the Curia.

VILLOT: I would have stopped him.

BENELLI: He removed you. There was only one way you could stop him.

LC96

VILLOT: I did not murder the Pope.

BENELLI: You drove him. You couldn't change him. So you isolated him and drove him.

VILLOT: (Stands up) Yes, I drove him. I drove him day and night.

BENELLI: He was in error. He was wrong.

VILLOT: He was in error.

BENELLI: He would have destroyed the Church.

VILLOT: Yes.

BENELLI: He had to die.

VILLOT Yes.

BENELLI: *He had to die for the Church.*

VILLOT; Yes, I drove him-I worked him- I drove him until his body -until he died. Yes. .God help me...I killed the Pope. (*The room is silent.*)

BENELLI: *(Softly.) We all killed him.*

IGN13

This was the generation which had taught Luciani in the Belluno

seminary that religious 'freedom' was confined to Roman Catholics.

'Error has no rights.' Luciani in turn had taught his own pupils this same appalling doctrine.

IGN284-286

Villot, Calvi, Marcinkus, Sindona, Gelli, Cody: one of these men was at the very heart of the conspiracy that resulted in the murder of Luciani. Before you, the reader, consider your verdict, let us take one final look at these men.

Cardinal Jean Villot, whom Albino Luciani had decided to remove from office, retained his position as Secretary of State upon the election of Karol Wojtyla. He also retained his many other posts including the control of the vital financial section, the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See, APSA. It was APSA that took the role of bride in the Sindona/Vatican marriage. Archbishop Marcinkus